

Historical Overview of Bartlesville's Public Schools

...

Granger Meador
Exec. Dir. of Technology & Communications,
Bartlesville Public Schools
2023



1874-1899

NO free public schools in Bartlesville until 1899.

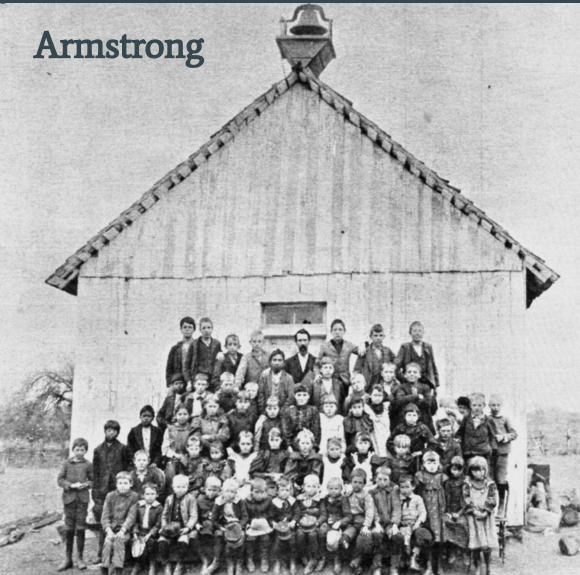
Instead, there were “Subscription” schools with tuition of 50 ¢ to \$1 per month per student, sometimes reduced by in-kind payments in food or lodging. Indian children were not charged, as the Cherokee Nation paid their teachers.



Silver Lake

75-100 one-room schoolhouses in the county

- 1874-1890s: Silver Lake
- 1877-1880s: Carr's trading post just south of Oak Park
- 1879: Smith-Bellows north of Price Field on Tuxedo
- 1889: Bartles Town/Northside
- 1890-1900s: Armstrong on Delaware Avenue, later 2nd & Osage
- 1907: Limestone school for Delaware Indians at Washington Blvd. & Nowata Road, and Prairie School at Ranch Heights location through 1939
- Others farther out, such as Fish Creek, Rice Creek, and Highland Park



Armstrong



Limestone Prairie



Smelter

1899 BPS Begins

First classes held at Armstrong Subscription School at 2nd & Osage, Methodist Church near 4th & Delaware, and a frame building at 6th & Cherokee built by Johnstone, Keeler, Bartles, and Armstrong.

Three more frame buildings would be added at 6th & Cherokee before Garfield School opened there in 1904.

*Garfield School before 1905,
as a two-room schoolhouse.*



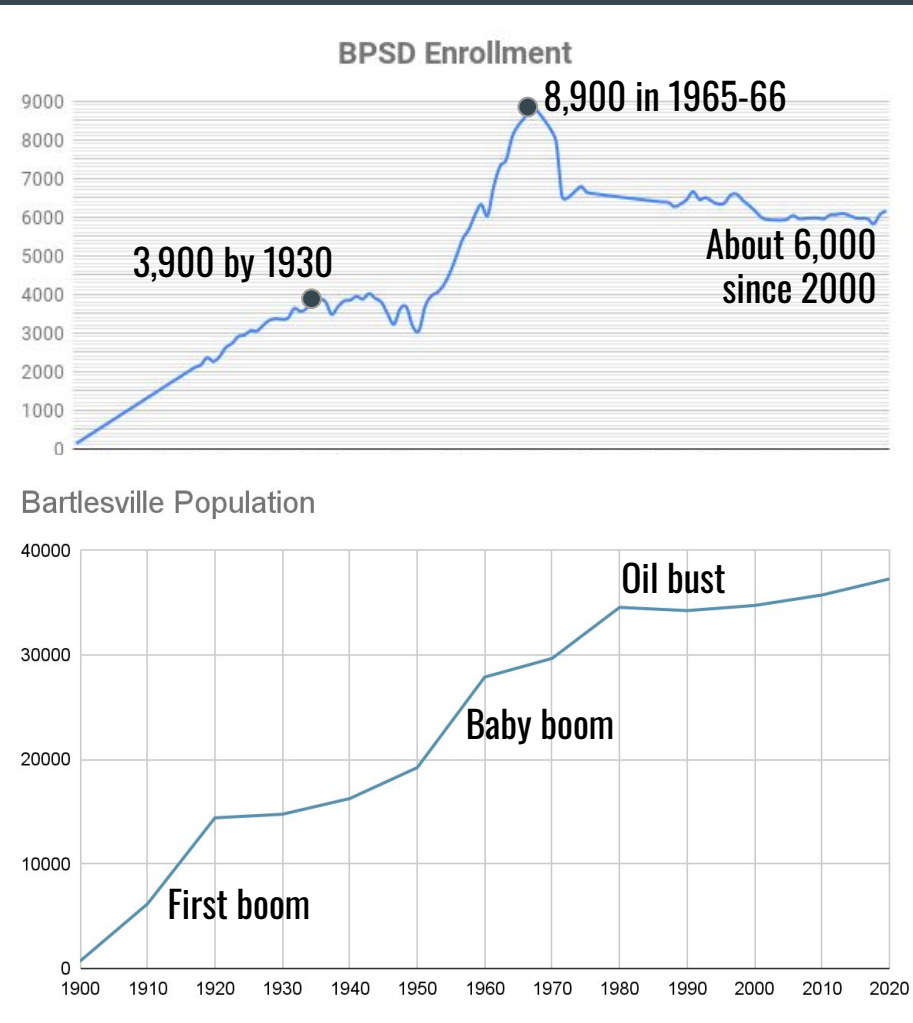
Three Decades of Growth

Six different principals
from 1899 through 1905

138 pupils ages 6-17 in
1900; over 2,000 by 1911
and 3,900 by 1930

Boom & Bust

The Great Depression,
World War II, and
1986 oil bust impacts



The First Boom



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BARTLESVILLE OKLAHOMA 1917

American Lumber Co.
Auto-Welding & Machine Co.
Alexander, Ernest
Bartlesville Water Co.
Bartlesville Laundry
Bartlesville National Bank
Bartlesville Pharmacy
Bradford, S. J. M. D.
Campbell & Kirkpatrick, Real Estate.
Chandler of Commerce, H. A. Lane, Sec'y.
Crescent Plating Mill.

Crystal Ice and Cold Storage.
Cuttlen, E. 1305 E 14th St.
Cline, W. J., Garage.
Coffey, J. O., Grocer.
City of Bartlesville.
Deputy, Albert, Livery.
Dietrich, E. O., Atty. at Law.
Eugland, T. H., Bookkeeper, Swallow's Assn.
Eastburn, Chas., Bakery.
Faulkner, Edwin, Plumbing Contractor.
Foley, T. M., Electric Co.

First National Bank.
Gossens, J. P., Leather Goods.
Hind, Walter.
Hansen, E. O., Mgr. Swallow's Assn.
Hickey, J. E., Justice of the Peace.
Indian Territory Electric Co.
Kil & Dwyer, Lumber.
Kester, Geo. R., Oil Contractors.
Lindacher Tool Co.
Morris, W. H., Mgr. Lumber Sh. B'y.
Mullen, Jay M., Real Estate.

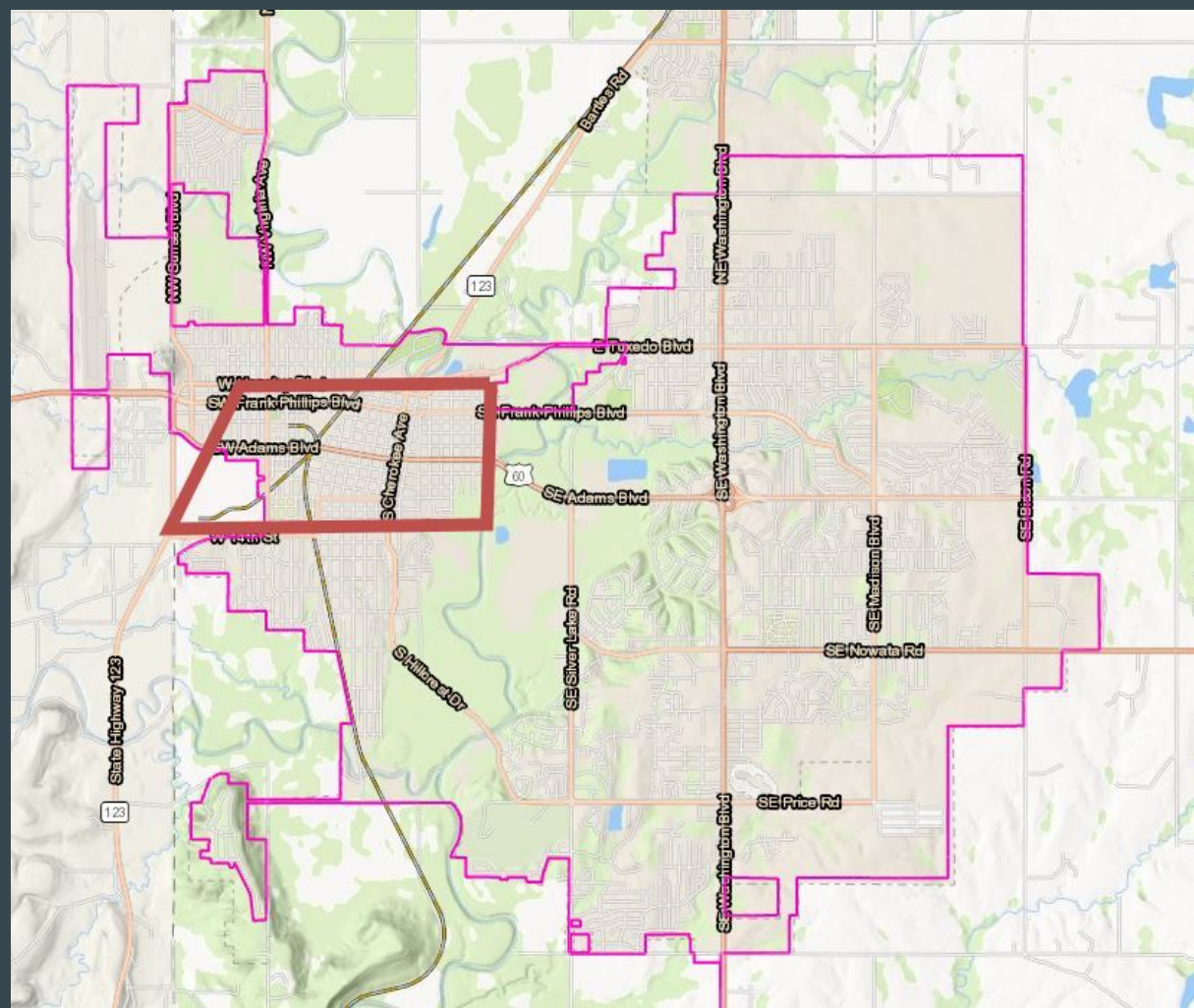
Mc Daniels, Fred, Postmaster.
Meyers, A. B., Florist.
Winkley, E. L., Electric Blue Repairing.
Nichols, Geo., Clerk.
Nye, E. E., Mechanician.
Overton, J. L., Real Estate.
Oakland, Garage.
Osage Foundry & Machine Co.
Oil Well Supply Co.
O. K. Laundry.
Penzell, Chas., Atty. at Law.

Tracy, G. W., Electric Blue Repairing.
Primely, W. B., Gas & Oil Investments.
Pinner, Ed., and Tel. Co.
Qua Pan Gas Co.
Quality Model Laundry.
Rach, F. C., Cashier Bartlesville State Bank.
Southern Abstract Co.
W. S. Kline & Co.
Stock, M. Mgr. National Zinc Co.
Stock, W. B., Sec'y. T. M. C. A.
Superior Closures and Buttons.

Schommers, A. P., House Moving.
Southwestern Pattern Co.
Thompson, B. C., Brown M'f'y.
Union National Bank.
Union Sheet Metal Co.
Union Machine Co.
Vassler, C. C., Sheet Metal.
Wain, P. A., Boiler M'f'y.
Woodmont Mercantile Co.
Woodring, G. F. M. D.
Frank, H. E. M. D.

G & M Division
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The City in 1917 versus Today



1910: High School



1907: Horace Mann



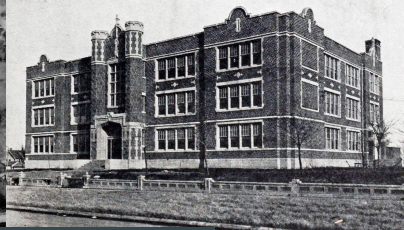
1924: McKinley



1912: Douglass



1917: Central



1905: Garfield



1907: Washington



1909: Jefferson



1914: Lincoln



BARTLESVILLE OKLAHOMA 1917

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Eastburn, Chas., Bakery
Faulkner, Edna, Flouring Contractor
Foley, T. M., Electric Co.

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Gossens, J. P., Leather Goods.
Hind, Mable
Hoskins, E. O., Mgr. Steelmen's Assn.
Hickey, J. E., Justice of the Peace
Indiana Turnkey Sheds & Co.
Kil & Dwyer, Lumber
Kester, Geo. B., Oil Inventor
Lindbeck Tool Co.
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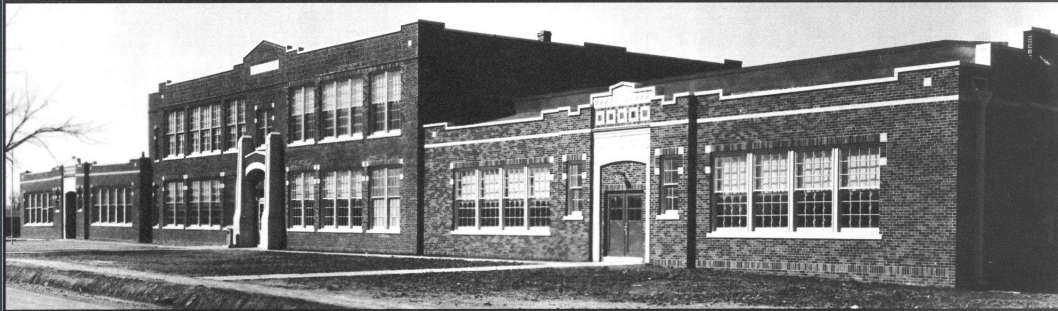
Pyatt, G. W., Electric Blue Repairing
Primely, W. B., Gas & Oil Investments
Pinner, Ed. and Tel. Co.
Qua Pan Gas Co.
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Union National Bank
Union Sheet Metal Co.
Union, Mortimer Co.
Vassler, G. C., Sheet Metal
Wain, P. A., Boiler M'Y.
Woolcott Mercantile Co.
Woodring, G. F., M. D.
Yarn, H. M., D.

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Our Schools in the Early 20th Century

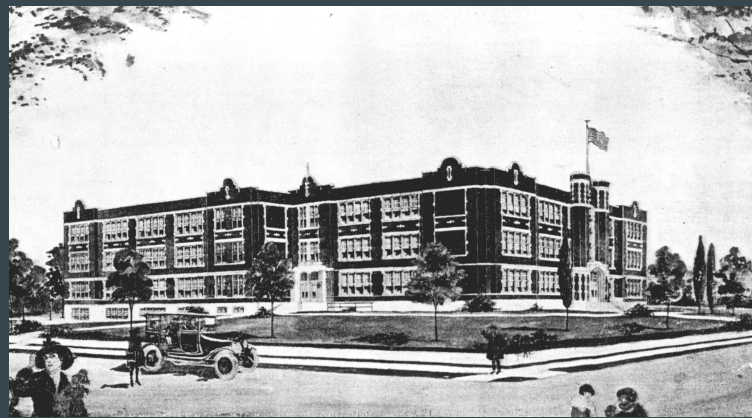
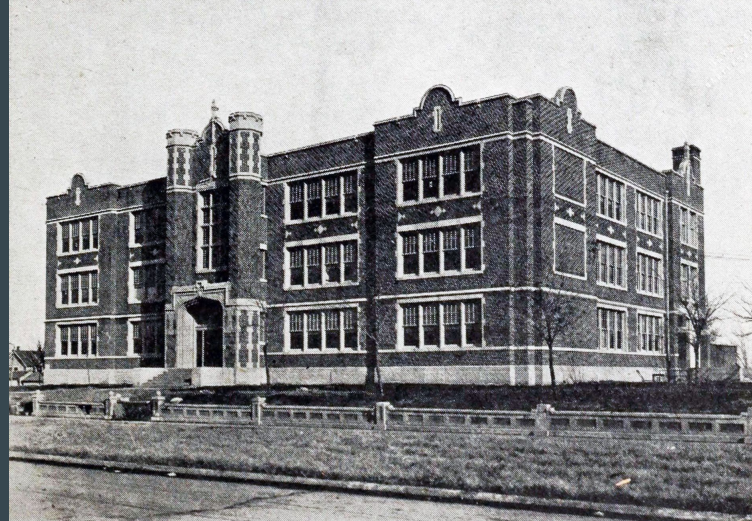
- Small neighborhood elementary schools
 - Sometimes with a teacher as principal
- No lunchrooms
- No elementary libraries or gyms
- No special education
- No air conditioning
- Blacks segregated from statehood through 1956

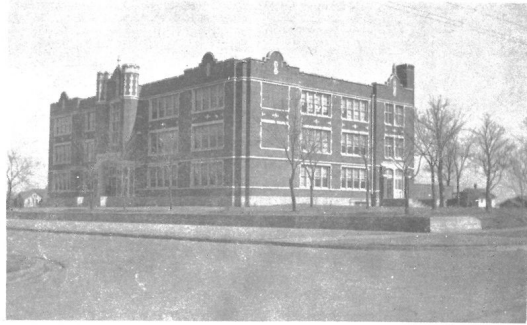


The School Year

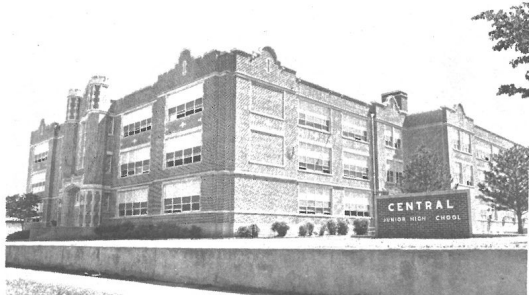
Year	1900-1901	1938-1939	1993-1994	2023-2024
Classes Started	September 17	September 12	August 16	August 10
Days in School Year	Approx. 160	174	175	174
School Vacations	Thanksgiving (2) Christmas (5)	Thanksgiving (2) Christmas (6)	Fall Break (2) Thanksgiving (2) Christmas (10) Spring Break (5)	Fall Break (2) Thanksgiving (5) Christmas (10) Spring Break (5)

Central





This We Remember



In the 1920s, 5 classes in a student's day, with classes of 30-40 students.

No buses, so students could be detained.

No cafeteria; some went to Gray's Grocery Store (later Ferndell's in the 1930s).

In 1930s, a sandwich was a dime, chips a nickel, and soft drink a nickel for a meal under 25 cents.

25-cent hot lunch program set up in a classroom in 1942 with students eating in the library.

Cafeteria building added in 1957 offering a plate lunch or a sandwich lunch.

Flash Gordon serials shown in auditorium at lunch in 1940s until a fire on a Saturday night in January 1949 that burned the curtains, stage, and piano and blistered the seats.

Original High School



Faculty in 1912-13; today's high school has about 10 times more faculty.





Quartet in the 1920s sang “Has Anybody Seen My Cat?”, “They Always Pick on Me”, and “The Baby Sister Blues”.

*Ring around a rat tail, shinny up a tree!
Bartlesville High School! Ee! Ee! Eeee!*



The original high school became overcrowded, and in the 1920s Central was expanded to the east to replace it.

The original high school was demolished around 1940 and the Ritz Apartments replaced it.





Remnants of it were used to build the Ozarka water building on 1st Street (Hensley Blvd) just west of the railroad tracks





**That building was known as a gambling den, with
some insert stones representing the card suits**

Club

Diamond

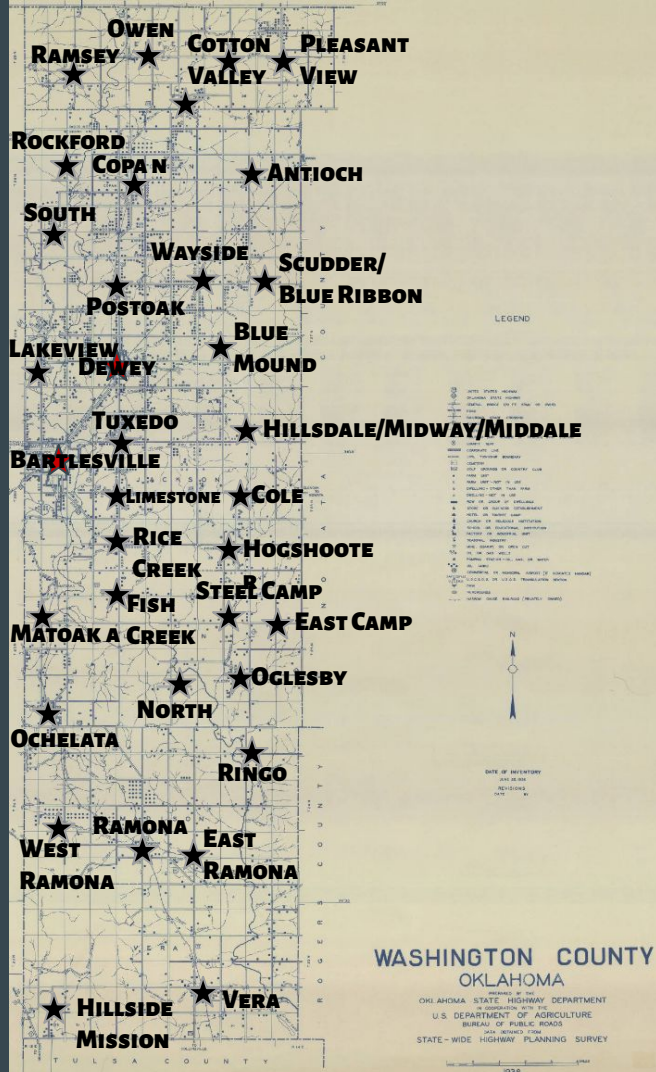
Heart

Spade

The east part of Central that was
the replacement high school.



County Schools A Century Ago



*OVER A CENTURY OF SCHOOLS
IN WASHINGTON COUNTY:*

*GONE BUT
NOT FORGOTTEN*

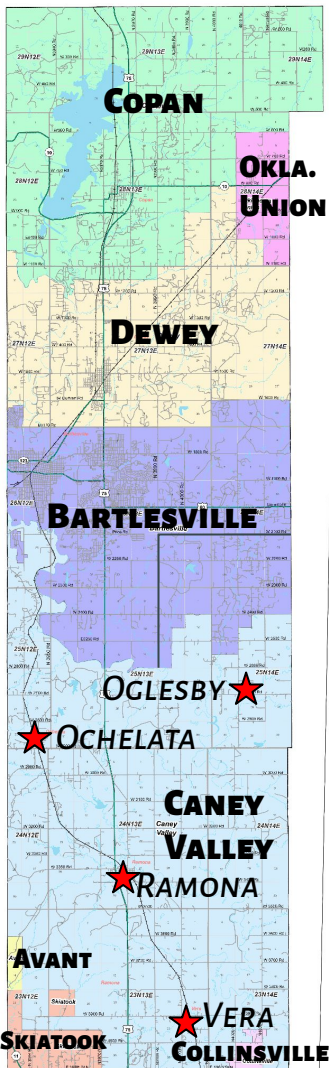


*Compiled by the staff of the Bartlesville Area History Museum, 2010
(home of the Nelson Carr One-Room School)
401 S. Johnstone Avenue, 5th Floor
Bartlesville, OK 74003
918-338-4290*

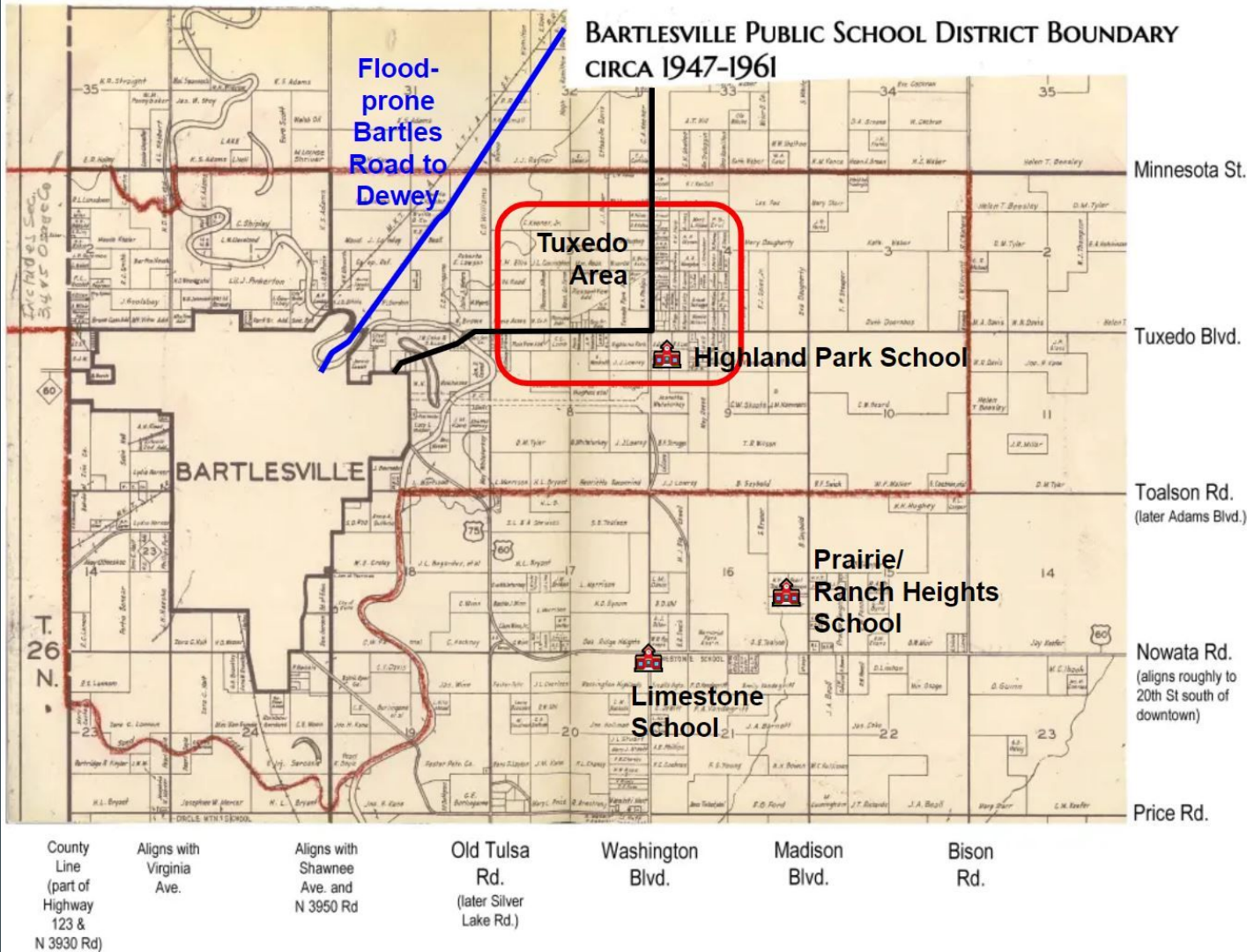
Today's Districts

Consolidation in the south:

- At least 9 schools in the Caney Valley area a century ago
- Formed in 1970 when Ramona & Ochelata districts annexed to Vera, but Vera's students bused to Ramona
- Reorganized in 1983 with Caney Valley Elementary in Ochelata and the Jr. High/Middle and High schools in Ramona
- Oglesby was last small independent district in 1970s; failed millages forced annexation to Caney Valley, but then northern portions voted to be re-annexed to Bartlesville

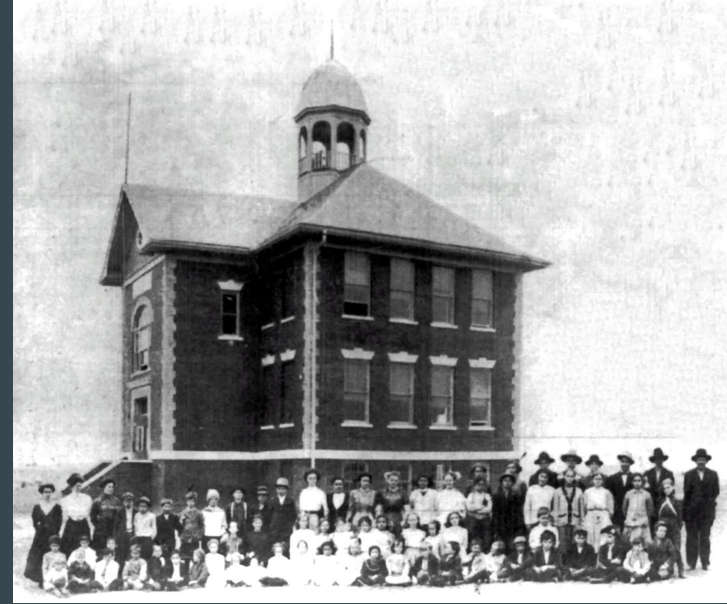


Other Area Schools

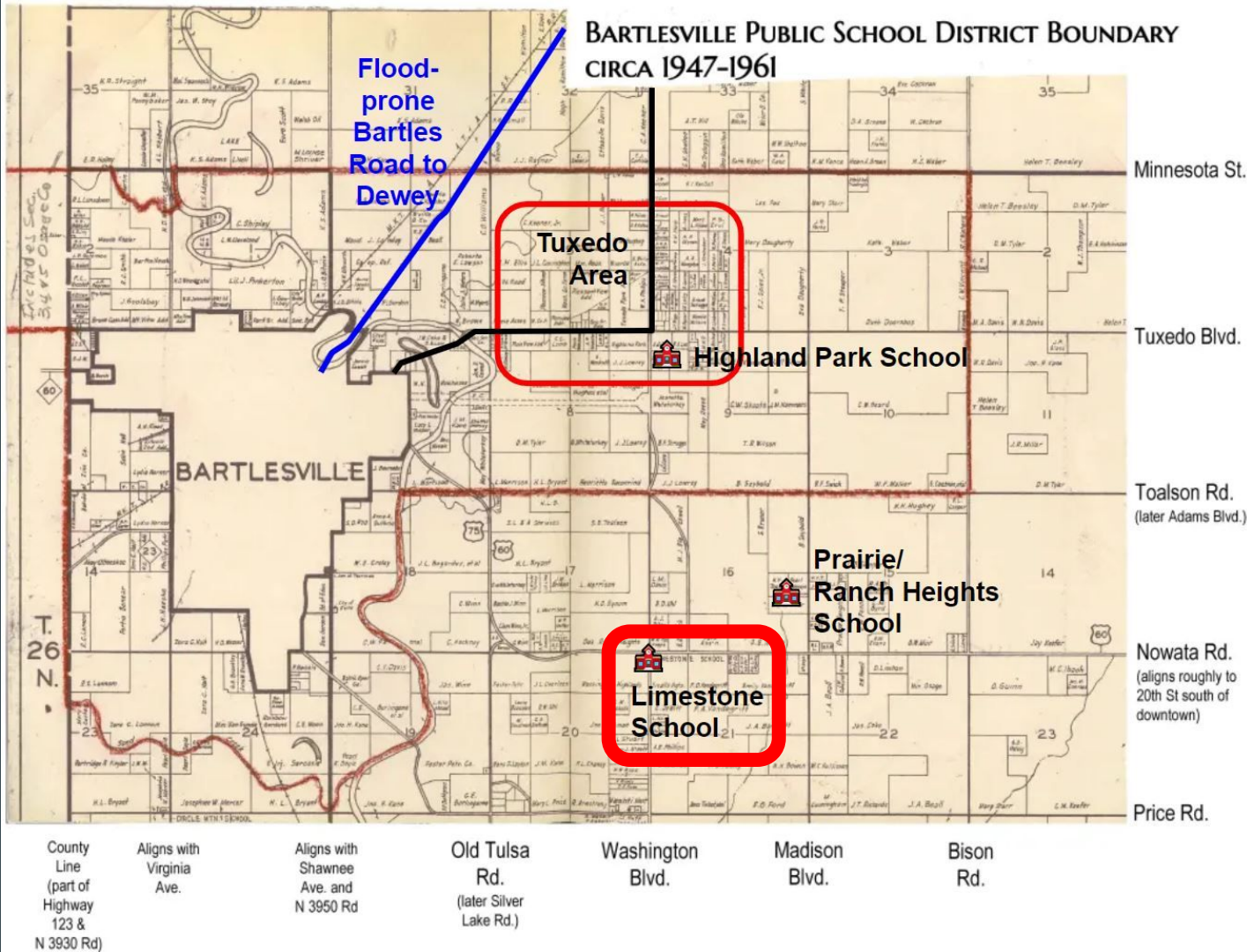


Highland Park

- Tuxedo & Washington Blvds.
- 1909 building had 3 teachers and manual training (woodworking) equipment and an auditorium/classroom with piano and Victrola
- Building replaced in 1920s
- District absorbed into BPSD in 1930
- Expanded multiple times during baby boom
- Closed in 1985; sold & demolished in mid-1990s

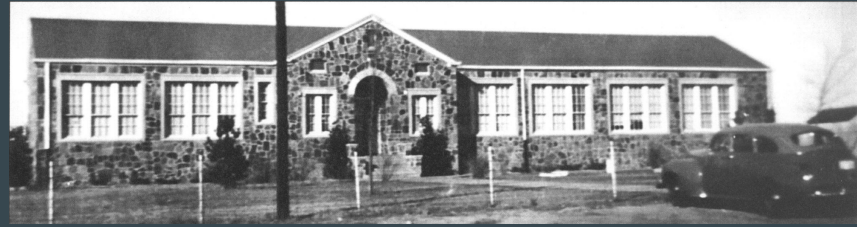


Other Area Schools

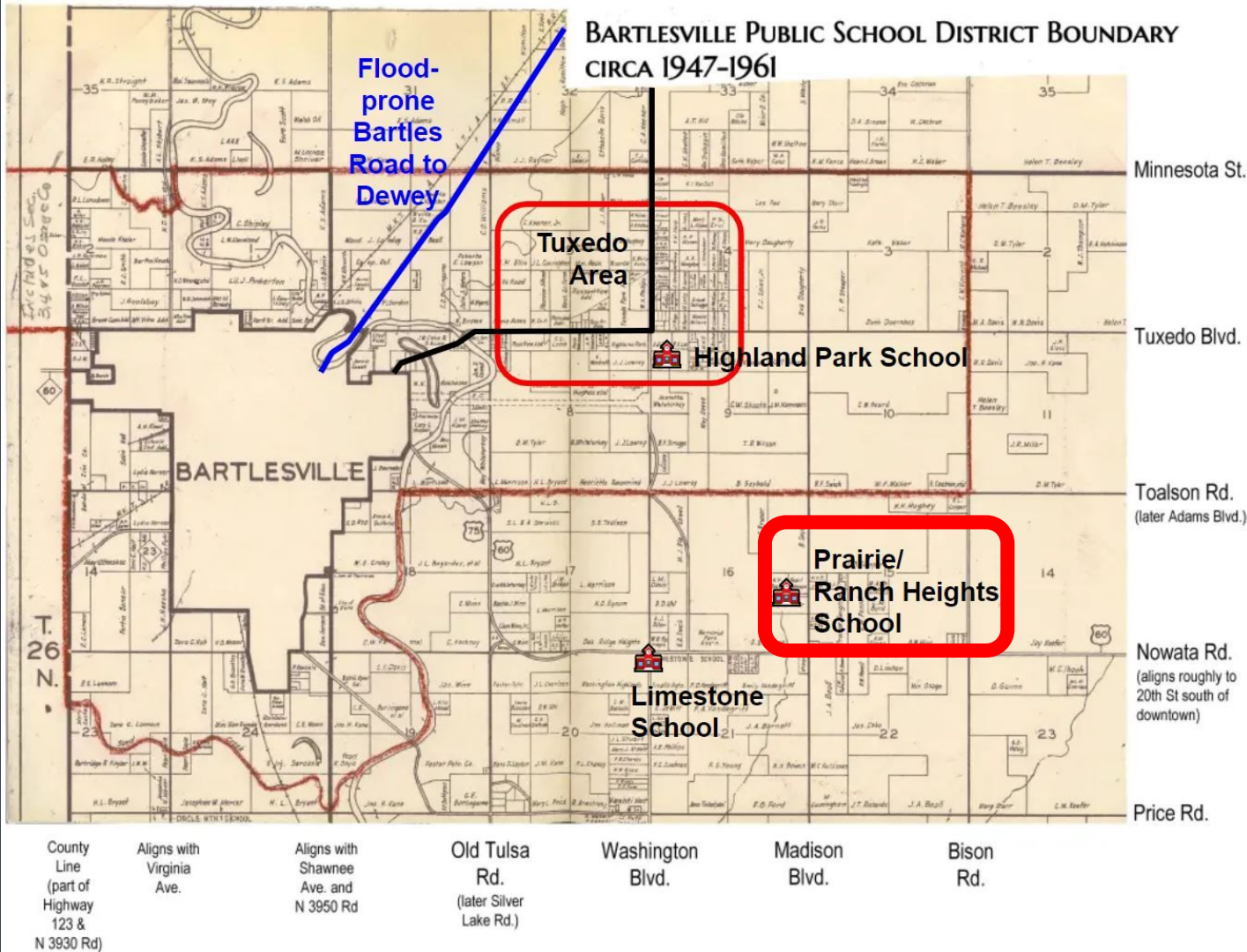


Limestone

- One-room schoolhouse for Delaware Indians replaced in 1939 with WPA building in Zebra stone with 3 classrooms & auditorium
- By 1951, Limestone had absorbed Middale, Rice Creek, and Fish Creek schools with grade 7+ bussed to Bartlesville
- 3 more classrooms in 1950; 3 more in 1953; 1 more in 1954 & auditorium into 2 more; auditorium, lunchroom, and kitchen in 1956
- District absorbed into BPSD in 1962
- Closed in 1986; sold in 2007 & demolished in 2008

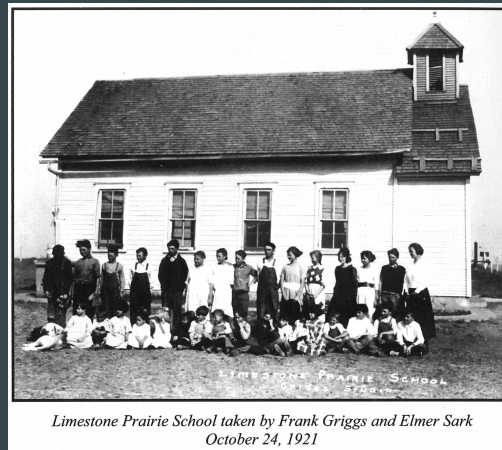


Other Area Schools



Prairie/Ranch Heights

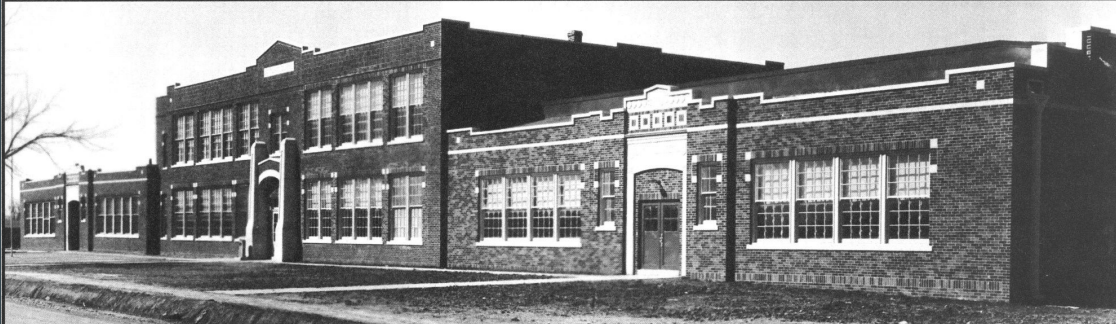
- One-room Prairie school from 1907-1939
- New Ranch Heights school built by the Limestone District in 1957 with 4 classrooms, all-purpose room, lunchroom, kitchen, offices
- 2 more classrooms in 1958, 6 more in 1961 plus auditorium & music room
- District absorbed into BPSD in 1962
- More additions in 1993, 2007, and 2024 to expand it to 35 regular classrooms plus music, art, special education, etc.



Douglass Segregation School

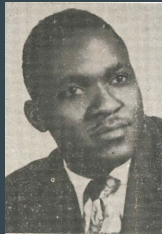
- Started in 1907
- 6 additions to 1912 building at 5th & Virginia
- First lunchroom in 1940 under WPA, then PTA; cafeteria in 1952
- High Steppers marching band

Douglass Dragons & Douglassaires Glee Club



Luvenia Brown

- Joined faculty in 1910 from Emporia State Teachers College with 45 students
- Organized Renaissance Club; president for 28 years
- Luvenia Brown Day Nursery established in 1939, initially serving 21 children
- Passed in July 1954; pallbearers included former Douglass principals R.G. Parrish, I.O. Garcia, and T.P. Scott, plus Charles “Cool City” Smith



COACH CHAS. W. SMITH



1955 State Football Championship

- Douglass Dragons & Boyd High School at Frederick slated to play for OIAA Class B State Championship
- Bartlesville refused to pay for travel to Frederick, so teams crowned co-champions
- At the same board meeting, the Bartlesville board paid \$400 for 20 letter jackets for the team & voted to begin desegregating 51 junior high and 37 senior high students at Douglass



1955 State Football Championship

- Jane Morrison was first black student to attend Col-Hi in 1956; recalled racial taunts, exclusion from prom, YWCA, and some restaurants during band trips
- Douglass reduced to grades 1-8 in 1956, then 1-6, then K-3 & closed in 1971



College High

- Planned brick exterior changed to concrete to support Dewey Portland
- Junior College closed in 1950



College High
Faculty in 1945

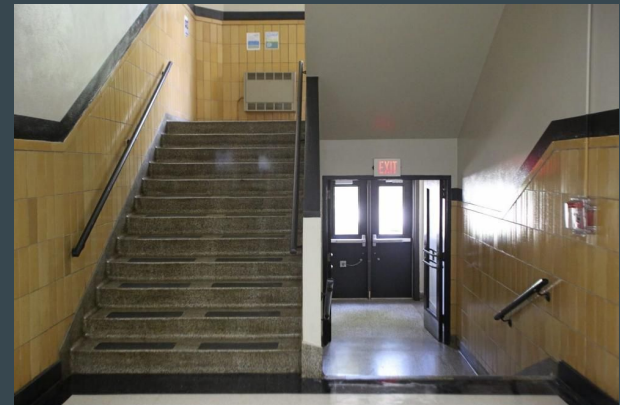
Pictured right are the members of the College-High faculty. They are, front row, left to right, Miss Grace Smith, Mrs. Joy Shields, Miss Mary Paxton, Mrs. Blythe Schulze, Miss Virlea Redding, and Miss Cleo Waterman; second row, Principal M. W. Taylor, Mr. Virgil Huston, Mr. W. S. Kleinsteinber, Miss Bess Hedges, Miss Amalia Guenther, Miss Villa Fender, Miss Esther Carlton, Mrs. Pearl Roffe, Mr. C. C. Custer, and Mr. E. J. DeAdel. Not pictured is Mr. W. D. McKeehan.



Sister School in Southwest Tulsa



- John Duncan Forsyth also designed Daniel Webster High in southwest Tulsa →

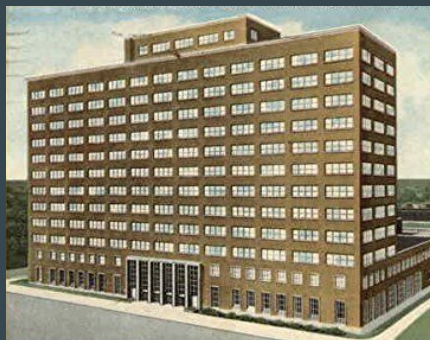
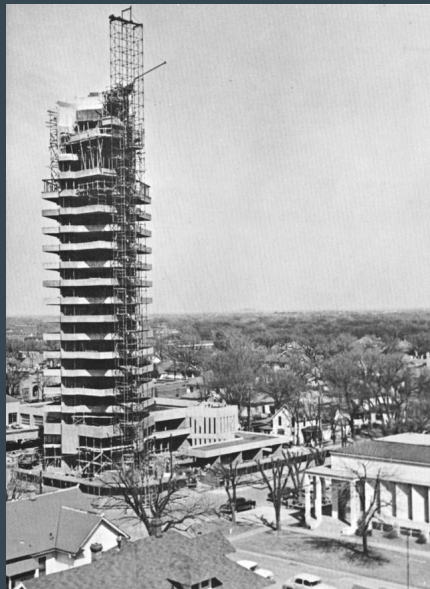


Manual Training Building

- Frank Phillips built it for his 66ers



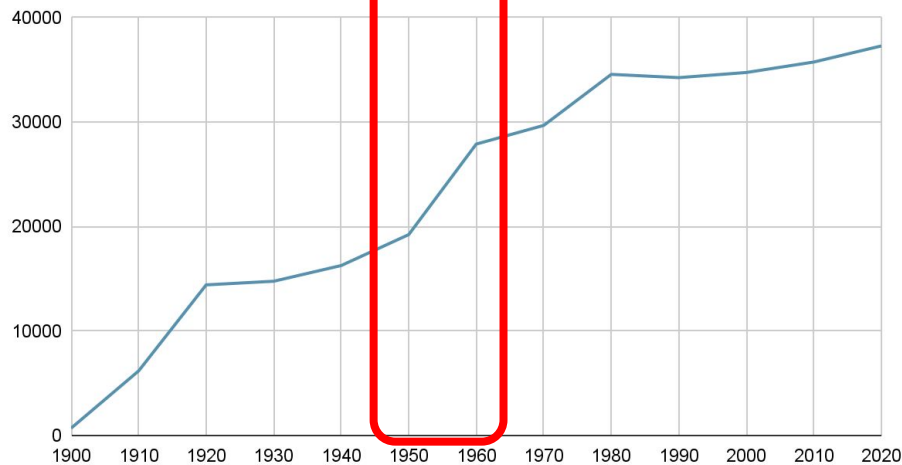
Baby Boom



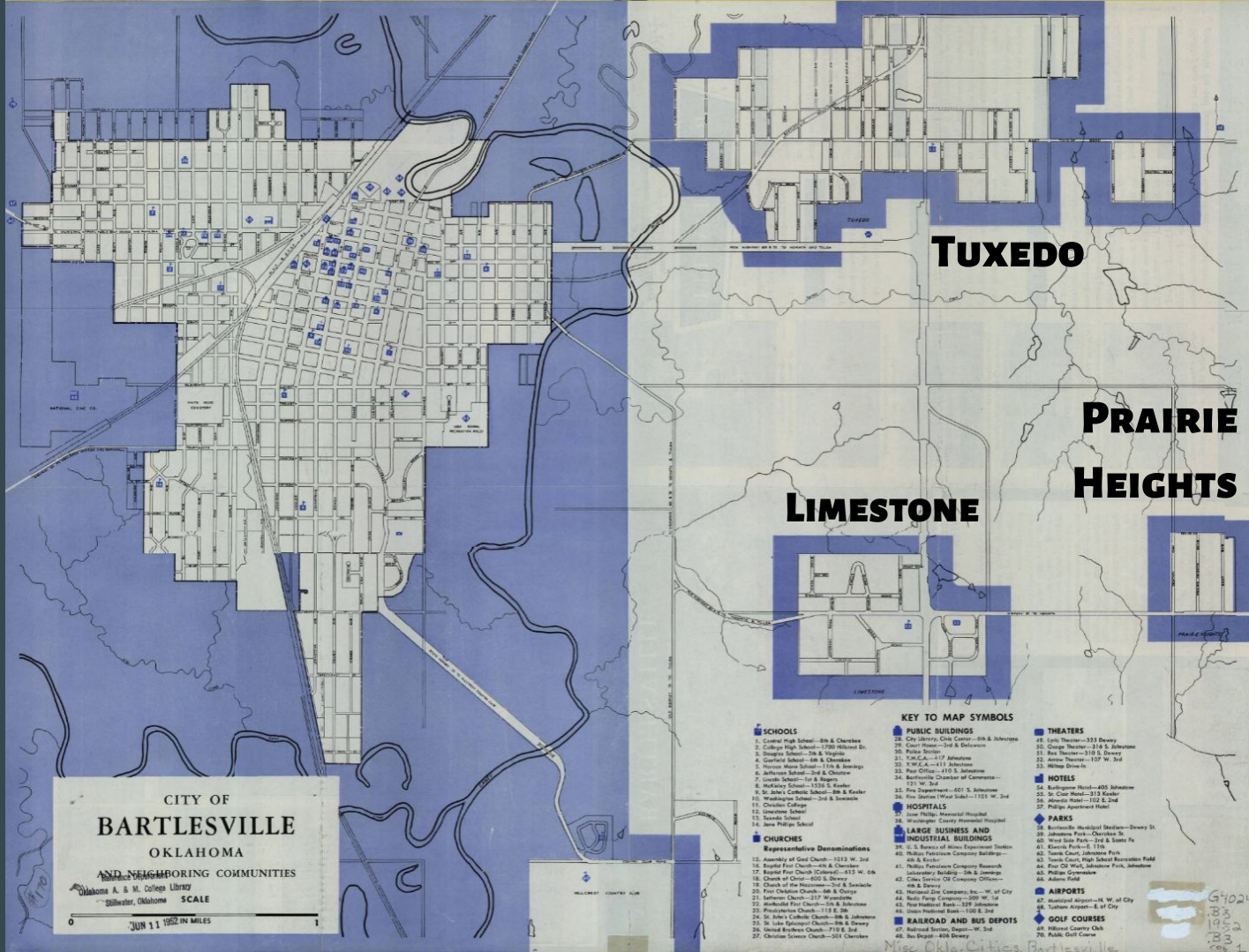
BPSD Enrollment



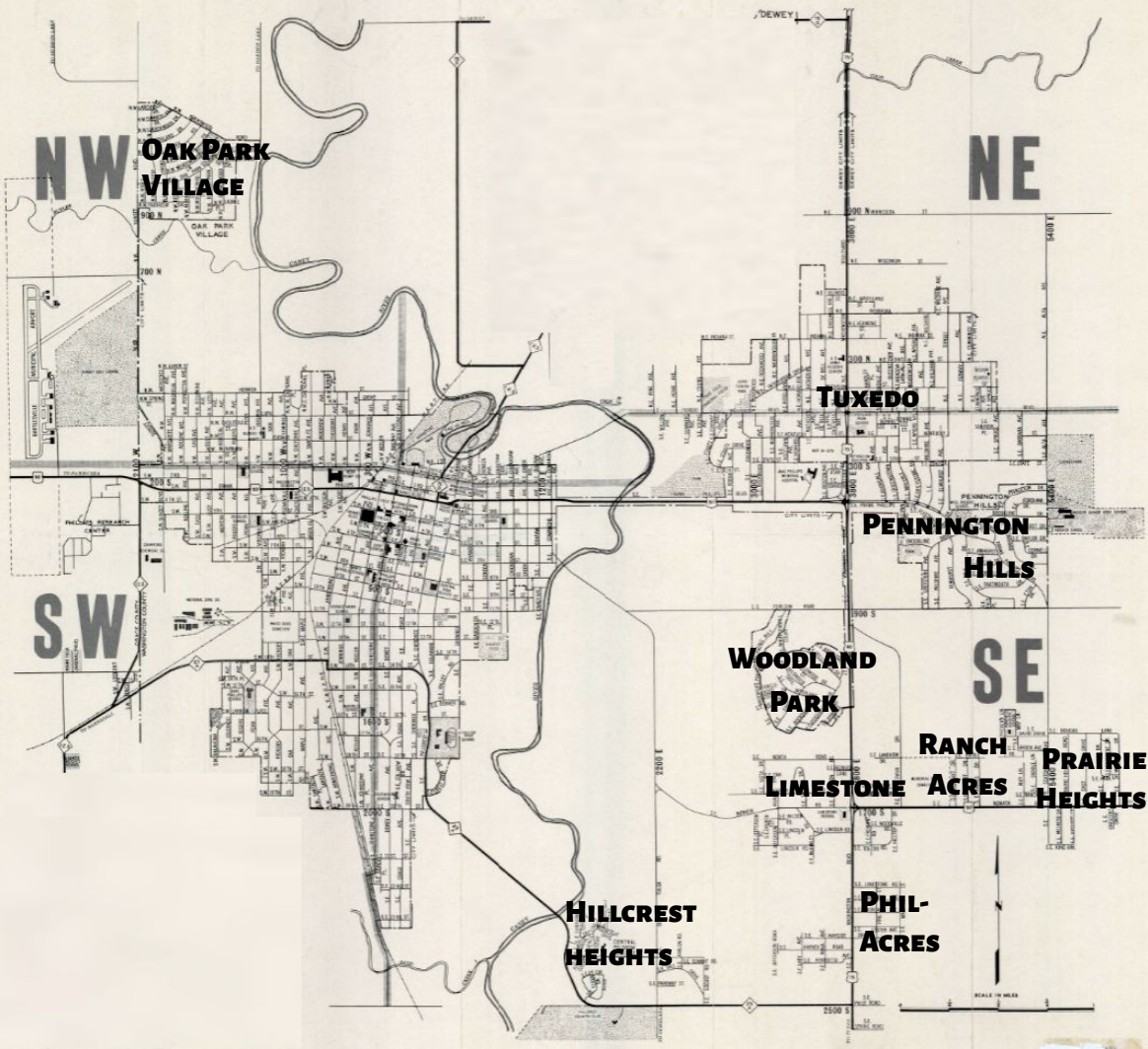
Bartlesville Population



1952



1960



Baby Boom

1956: Oak Park



1955: Will Rogers



1957: Wilson



1940: Jane Phillips



1957: Ranch Heights



1959: Hoover



1950: Southview



1959: Wayside



1958: Madison



1960s



1960s

- Cities Services leaves in 1968, taking 900 employees
- Phillips Building



1960s

- Tri-County Tech first vocational school in the state in 1968
- High school shops begin to disappear



High School Enrollment Crisis

- 1939: Bartlesville Senior High School & Junior College; 800 capacity
- 1024 by 1949; stadium/classrooms in 1954, basement cafeteria in 1956, 12-classroom annex in 1958
- Portable classrooms brought in the 1960s; auxiliary cafeteria in 1963
- 1,985 students in 1964-65 before Sooner High opened, with schedules starting at 7:30, 8:30, and 9:30



Sooner High

- November 1963: \$2.1 million bond to build Sooner High only receives 51%
- OU & OSU College of Education deans hired to do a study that projected 2,349 high school students in 1972 and recommended a second high school
- May 1964: \$2.25 million received 65%

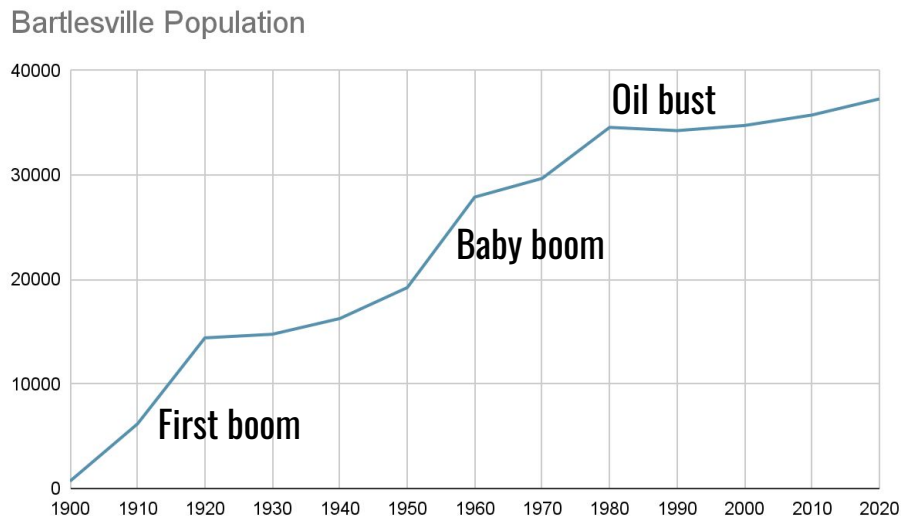
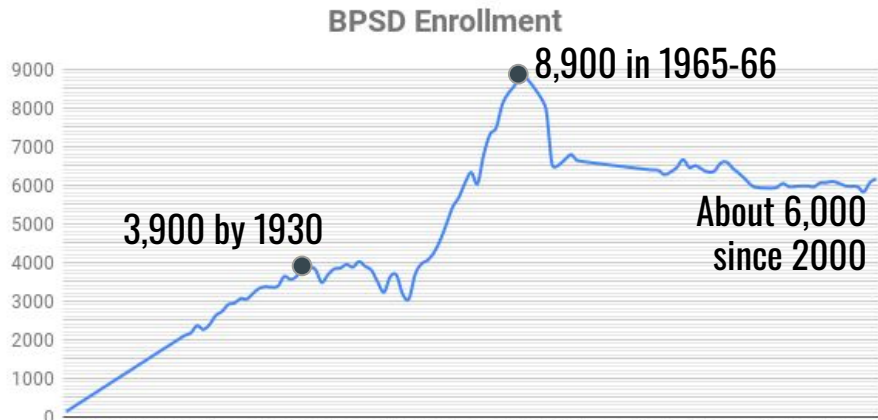
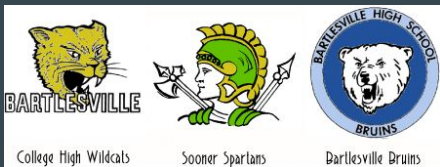


Baby Bust

- 1965-66: 8,900
- 1969-70: 7,975
- 1973-74: 6,798

First talk of
consolidating Sooner &
Col-Hi in 1973-74

Consolidation into the
Bruins in 1982



1970s

- 1972: Title IX boosts girls' sports
- 1975: federal mandate to serve ALL students with special needs
- 1977: Alternative High School opens



1980s

- Local Phillips employment peaks in early 1980s at over 9,000
- Plaza office building complex built using 43,000 bricks from original HQ

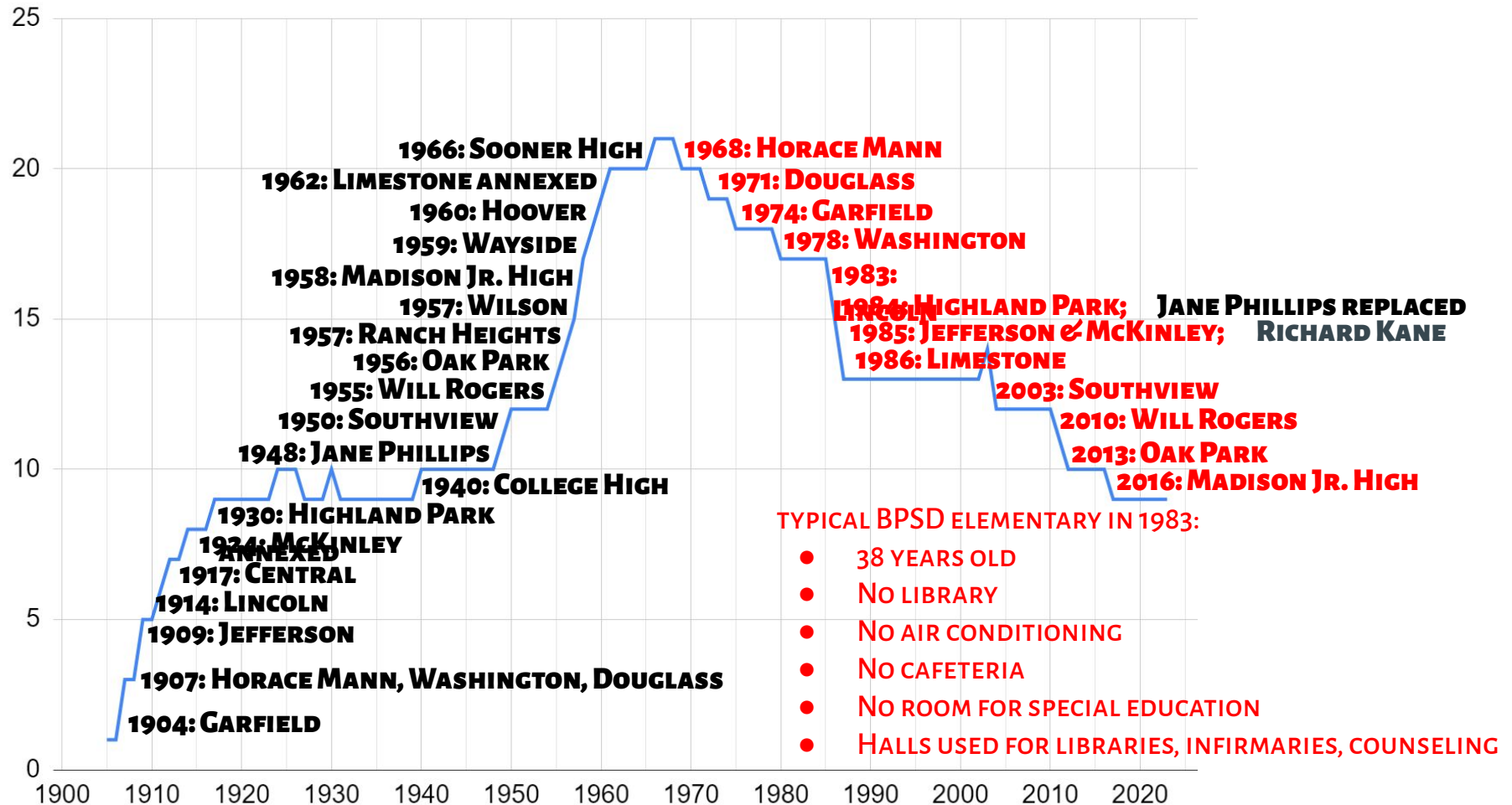


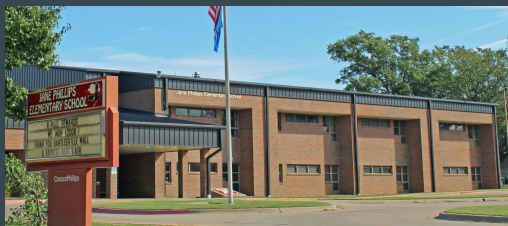
1980s

- Oil boom goes bust
- T. Boone Pickens and Carl Icahn mount takeover attempts
- Bartlesville loses population
- Local Phillips employment shrank to 2,400 by 2001



BPSS Schools



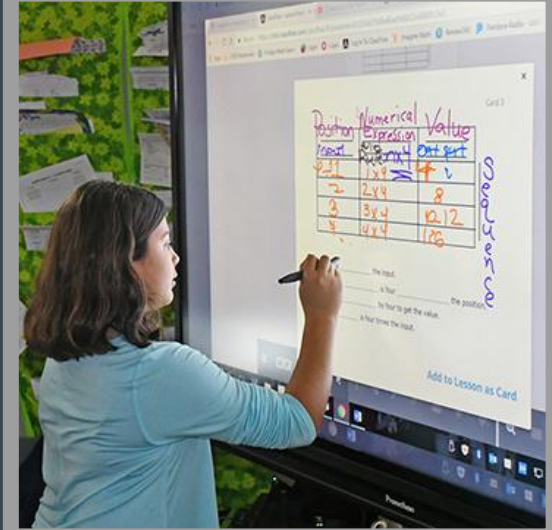


Consolidation Effects

- Elementary school sizes from 300-700
- Easier class size balancing with reductions to 20 in PreK-1st, 22 in 2nd-3rd, 24 in 4th-5th
- More efficient student:adult ratios for principals, secretaries, nurses, specials teachers, counselors, etc.
- Allowed dedicated cafeterias, gymnasias, libraries, and support services
- More buses, longer drop-off/pick-up lines

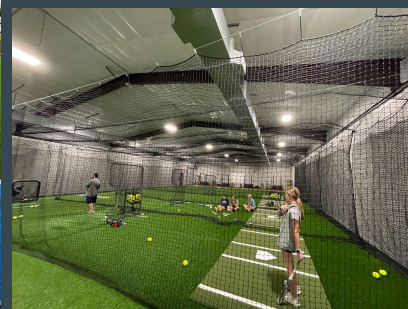
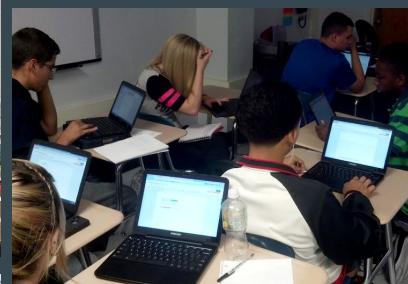
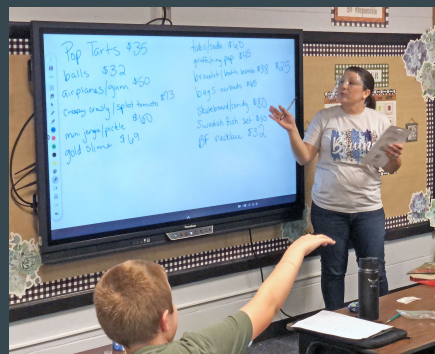


Technological Changes Since 1989



New in BPSD Since 1989

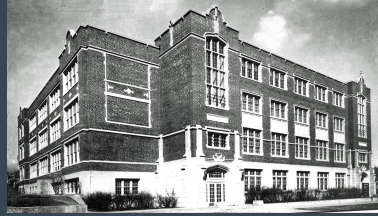
- Agriculture, broadcasting, STEM classes, including aviation
- Computer and teaching display in every classroom
- Chromebook for every student and electronic textbooks and online classroom systems, with cellular hotspots available
- Turf fields and large indoor practice facilities





Then & Now

Central in 1926



Wilson in the 1990s



Then & Now

College High in 1955





Bartlesville Public Schools

Home of the Bruins

MENU ☰

SCHOOLS ▼

PARENTS & STUDENTS ▼

DISTRICT ▲

COMMUNICATIONS

BARTLESVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS // DISTRICT

District Information

Bartlesville Public Schools

Independent School District #30

P.O. Box 1357

Bartlesville, OK 74005-1357

918-336-8600

District Code: 74-1030

Federal ID #: 73-6021263

Network Security Incident

District Information ▼

Contact Information

Administration

Athletics

Board of Education ▼

BruinBond

COVID ▼

Employment & Personnel

District History ▲

District Archives

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